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# Flexing verbal formative feedback to achieve different outcomes: lessons from school

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# Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session you will be able to:

- use appropriate language to improve student learning;
- consider how your students receive, understand and use verbal feedback in their learning;
- challenge your own assessment practice.

# What is feedback?

*“The notion of feedback is fascinating – whilst feedback is referenced in almost all studies of learning, it sometimes seems as if it is a unidimensional notion understood by all.”*

Hattie & Masters, 2012

In pairs, discuss what you think feedback is, and create a definition.

What would students say?

# Feedback as....

Analogies and metaphors are a common tool used within the feedback discourse:

- the feedback triangle (Yang and Carless 2013),
- feedback as a loop (Mislevy 2012),
- ‘feedback as telling’ (Boud and Molloy 2012 p.14),
- feedback as a gift (Hargreaves 2005),
- feedback as a dialogue (Carless *et al.* 2011; Nicol 2010),
- feedback as talk (Ajjawi and Boud 2018),
- feedback as a consequence (Hattie and Timperley 2007),
- feedback as a Trojan horse (Kirton et al. 2007) or
- feedback as an ‘elaborate dance’ (Dennis et al. 2018, p.93).

# Position within AfL paradigm

1. Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success.
2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions, and learning tasks.
3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward.
4. Activating students as the owners of their own learning.
5. Activating students as instructional resources for one another.

# Interactions

Feedback Can Occur Between:

- tutor to student
- student to tutor
- student to student
- tutor to tutor

*Which is most valuable in schools, and why?*

*The feedback students give teachers can be more powerful than the feedback teachers give students (Tovani, 2012)*

# What teachers see as feedback

- Comments
- Clarification
- Criticism (pros & cons)
- Confirmation
- Content development
- Correction

*[All of these tend to relate to how the student is doing now]*

(Hattie & Masters, 2012)



# Student perceptions of feedback

Feedback is much more about what students receive than teachers give.

Students contend strongly that they attend to feedback, even if they fail to act upon it (Glover & Brown, 2006).

When feedback is given to the whole class, it's received by no-one as they believe its not about them.

Tutors believed that they were providing more detailed feedback than the students themselves believed they received, and that the nature of their feedback was more useful than the students perceived it to be (Glover & Brown, 2006).

There is confusion about the purpose of feedback from both tutor and student viewpoints, as it is often linked to grades rather than to improve learning (Carless, 2006, Handley, Price & Millar, 2008).

Students may claim to understand the feedback, even when they did not, and when they did understand it, they did not know how to apply it to their future learning (Nuthall, 2007).

# **What sort of feedback does your teacher give you about your physics work?**

L: We get, like, those question things...

W: She marks our book regularly as well.

S: She gives like a question that we have to do, or something to prove.

B: All teachers have to do it, but it's not really very good 'cos normally they are questions that you don't know the answer to.

L: if you just ask her, she tells you the answer, because that's all she can really do. But the questions are sometimes just like, why haven't you underlined this with a ruler? And it's like ...I forgot!

W: You get an odd question, every couple of months that you actually have to think about, but the rest of them, they're not that useful. The questions are more like time-wasting.

S: That's not her fault though, that's the school policy.

	Hattie & Masters (2011)	Gan (2011)	Van den Bergh, Rose & Beijaard (2013)
Level	18 secondary classes	235 peers	32 teachers in primary school
Task	59%	70%	51%
Process	25%	25%	42%
Regulation	2%	1%	2%
Self	14%	4%	5%

# Three Fundamental Principles of Effective Classroom Feedback

1. Be more work for the recipient than the donor.  
**Feedback should cause thinking.** Students should be expected to have time to do something with it.

2. Be focused

‘less’ can be more: feedback should be accurate *and* helpful

3. Relate to shared learning goals

Have clear learning intentions and success criteria that are referenced through a lesson & in feedback given at the appropriate time

# Pupil Generated Success Criteria

How to help pupils understand success criteria:

1. Prove it/doing it wrong
2. A finished product
3. Comparison of two products
4. Sloppy success criteria
5. Retrospective creation
6. Revisiting existing

*Clarke, S. (2008) Active Learning Through Formative Assessment*

# Discussion and plenary

- What aspects of this session do you consider could be transferred to HE?
- What could it look like?
- What analogy of feedback resonates most with you now?

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